

ILLUSIONS

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2002



Pride Centre of Edmonton
9540 - 111 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5G 0A5

AROUND THE GLOBE —
FOR EDMONTON'S CROSSDRESSERS AND THOSE WHO ADMIRE THEM

EDITORIAL



Time for another issue, just to let everyone know what's on!

Well, you know summer's been and gone, and some trannies call it the Summer Doldrums: we all have yards, vehicles, and/or families that clamour for our time. Inevitably, dressing as a girl can only fall in priority. The June and July Illusions socials were lightly attended, and for all the plans voiced to get involved with the GLBT community for Pride Week,

very few of us were able to get dressed and show up (but think about it: the outfits we find ourselves in are hardly suited to a mile's march in 30°C weather, and cosmetics don't fare too well either). Still, the September meeting was well attended, with several new faces that were lovely to see. Remember, 2nd Thursday of the month!

So the griz from Illusions weren't terribly out to take in such events as Pride, the two big shows in Calgary, and any of the multifarious local shows. *sigh* A few of us managed to get together for various home functions; there's grand fun to be had with the girls over for coffee and clothes. Nancy's birthday party for Rusty was a pleasant event, but weather again got in the way of comfort. The Fringe, it turns out, is a wonderful and positive environment after the sun goes down, and several of us managed a cruise through or a play or two. It's the closest thing Edmonton has to Mardi Gras. One has to take care with the cobblestones of Old Strathcona, though, or will soon be taking shoes in for new heels!

A couple of notes relating to our sister groups in the West: Calgary's Illusions chapter welcomes all their out-of-town friends to their Saturday mixers, and has dropped their door charge to the same as for local members (in hope of drawing a few of us down south, no doubt). And Vancouver's Combury Society has decided to open their ranks to non-heterosexual crossdressers – good on them! It hasn't hurt Illusions here!

As usual, to close I prefer to rant in a ladylike fashion: If you crossdress and stay at home, well and good unto you; I feel that way many a time. However, there is nothing to compare with the special feeling of being out with others of like mind. Join us!

Shae

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Cover photo of Brittany by her wife, and photo this page by Brittany. Jell-O wrestling photo by Liz Gates. Back cover by Shelly.

INTERNATIONAL TRANSGENDER CELEBRATION & CONFERENCE

The Northern Concord and the Beaumont Society in the UK have announced the International Trans-Gender Celebration/Conference. Here is their press release:

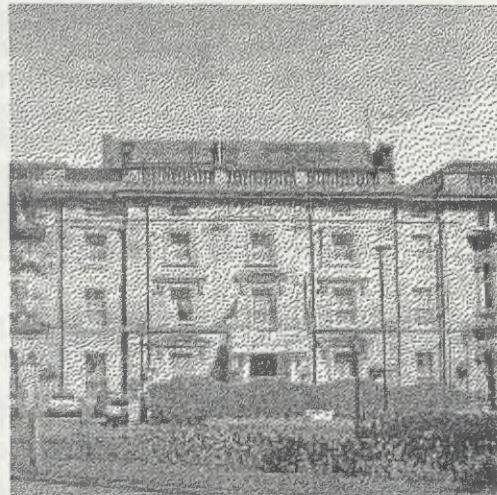
This one off event will take place in Harrogate, UK, from the 7th to 10th of August 2003. The venue is an 18th Century Coaching Inn.

It is being organized by Northern Concord and The Beaumont Society. It will be a mixture of a Transgender Celebration, with guests from all over the Western World, joining in with the celebration of our community going forward into the 21st Century as well as a Conference of advances in Transgender Medicine and Surgery.

We will have Workshops and Papers on these issues presented by Eminent Speakers in their particular field from across Europe, and further afield.

We are reaching out to Police Forces in the UK, Samaritans, Relate & Social Workers and inviting them to a seminar / discussion forum on the Saturday morning, to try to give them a better understanding of many issues surrounding all aspects of gender. The early interest already shown is assuring its success. So book early to avoid disappointment.

As well as the full all-inclusive weekend at £155, there will be Day Delegates, from £25 all-inclusive, and the Grand Dinner and Ball on the Saturday night at £35 per head for non-residents. Extra nights (Thursday & Sunday) at just £45 per person.



For the Brochure and booking form contact:
Janett Scott, Beaumont Society, JScott5426@aol.com
or
Jenny Baker, Northern Concord,
JennyB@northernconcord.org.uk

LETTERS AND OPINIONS

At the risk of continuing a debate that seems to have some momentum, I wanted to make a couple of comments regarding the SEE article and the responses to it as posted in the Illusions newsletter. Note that we are letting this issue of terminology override the good job done by the staff at SEE! I, for one, thought it a great article and it appeared in a venue where many from the general population will see it.

After reading the posts in the newsletter, I felt the need to say: "give it a rest." I know how badly the public needs to be informed about the entirety of the T community. Do we need to bad-mouth one of our biggest advocates? The person in a position of responsibility and respect who is representing us on a daily basis in all those places where so many of us don't want to be seen?

OK, so let's look at what appears to me to be the major problem. That problem is definitions. From the posts, most of the complaints were in one of 2 directions. Either the problem was with the terms used or their definitions or the problem was with the reference to "sexual fetish" in the transvestite definition.

1) Terms: I would like to point out here, that Dr. Warneke was quoted from an article he had written. As such, it was necessary to be technically correct. The terms used are, I believe, the currently accepted terms. But, perhaps the accepted terms have changed over the years. Thus, there may be confusion between the "official" terms and the "generally accepted" use of the term. To illustrate this dichotomy, allow me to use Kleenex and Aspirin as examples. Both of these terms are trademarked brand names. But in general use, they have become generic terms for anything similar to the branded products. As a

writer, it is the author's responsibility to use the term in its official manner only.

As to the official use, as I recall when I read the DSM, I believe it was edition IV, the term transvestite is, by definition, fetishistic. (Has that changed?) Whether or not you or I disagree is irrelevant. That is the definition and the term must be used officially as such. Again, the general use of the term is does not directly match with the official definition. Perhaps our energies would be better spent on getting the terms/definitions changed?

2) As Shae stated in her comment in the newsletter, the term transvestite is the medical term. If it is not used, then the author is discredited. Thus, funding disappears. So, I ask of you: If it means that Dr. Warneke can continue his work, which includes education of the public, can we tolerate his "technically" correct usage of the term? Or, must we sacrifice his work to make the point?

It has so often been said that the trans community doesn't like labels. No one wants to be labeled, particularly if that label has negative connotations. It appears from my, albeit brief reading, that, as a group, Illusions members prefer "cross-dresser" to "transvestite". Fine. Not a problem. But are you not merely substituting one label (possibly negative) for another label (hopefully less negative)? And, in X years, will there not be another label that you would prefer.

So, guys and gals, I reassert: "give it a rest." Move on with your lives as you wish your lives to be, and ignore the labels. Labels are only classifications, and I, for one, don't like to be classified.

Jen "Jenny Lucas" <jenny@blonde.yellowhead.com>

DEUTERONOMY 22:5

(Many thanks to Jenny Baker of the Northern Concord for pointing this out!)

"The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are an abomination unto the Lord thy God."

Dr. Laura and those of your ilk:

Thank you for doing so much to educate people regarding God's law. I have learned a great deal from you, and I try to share that knowledge with as many people as I can. When someone tries to defend the homosexual lifestyle, for example, I simply remind him of Leviticus 18:22 - "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination." End of debate. I do need some advice from you, however, regarding some of the specific laws and how to best follow them.

When I burn a bull on the altar as a sacrifice, I know it creates a pleasing odor for the Lord (Lev. 1:9 - "...of a sweet savour unto the Lord."). The problem is my neighbors. They claim the odor is not pleasing to them. How should I deal with this?

I would like to sell my daughter into slavery, as it suggests in Exodus 21:7 - "And if a man sell his daughter to be a maidservant, she shall not go out as the menservants do." In this day and age, what do you think would be a fair price for her? And does this mean she cannot crossdress either?

I know that I am allowed no contact with a woman while she is in her period of menstrual uncleanness (Lev. 15:19-24). The problem is, how do I tell? I have tried asking, but most women take offense.

Lev. 25:44 states that I may buy slaves from the nations that are around us. A friend of mine claims that this applies to Mexicans but not Canadians. Can you clarify?

I have a neighbor who insists on working on the Sabbath. Exodus 35:2 – "...a sabbath of rest unto the Lord: whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death." Am I morally obligated to kill him myself?

A friend of mine feels that even though eating shellfish is an abomination (Lev. 11:10), it is a lesser abomination than homosexuality. I don't agree. Can you settle this?

Lev. 21:20 states that I may not approach the altar of God if I have a defect in my sight. I have to admit that I wear reading glasses. Does my vision have to be 20/20, or is there some wiggle room here?

I know you have studied these things extensively, so I am confident you can help. Thank you again for reminding us that God's word is eternal and unchanging.

<http://www.2think.org/lauraschlessinger.shtml>

STEPHANIE – BY CATHY



CATHY'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE (PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE)

Well, where to start. I've had so many firsts over the last couple of months. Some of you veterans out there might be thinking whoop dee doo, but it doesn't matter if thousands have done it before, a first is a first.

For instance, going shopping en femme for the first time here in the city. I was accompanied by one of my best friends Dawn a lovely *real* girl. She is a bit of an anarchist and does give two hoots what I wear. We spent a lovely day together. I went to my favourite outlet store. I'd been there before in drab "shopping for my sister's birthday". This was my maiden voyage there as Cathy. It was wonderful. I was treated just like everyone else. I was a little nervous, but having a friend with me

helped. So did the friendly staff. I came away with a cool pair of jeans and a top. The best part was using the change room - finally not having to guess how something would look and fit on me. No one batted an eye. The girls must have read me but they still treated me super. Hey my money is the same blue, purple green and red as everybody else's. I've been back as recently as last week and had the same decent reception.

I am slowly learning that it doesn't matter what people think. If I go out and conduct myself with pride and decency then maybe I'll be treated that way. You may get snickers or the few odd stares, but who cares? At the very least you've brought some enjoyment to someone's day. At the most you may have given someone a better understanding that transgender people are just that: people. I'm not, however, about to run out and tell all my co-workers. I guess it still does matter what some people think. But that list is getting smaller (just like my closet).

Catherine

IF YOU'RE GOING TO BE A FEMALE, PLEASE DON'T BE AN AIRHEAD

(Originally published in the Rainbow Newsletter of the Rainbow Gender Association.)

(When this editor started searching the Web for crossdressing info, one of the first places found was Jamie Fenton's site, <http://members.tgforum.com/jamie>. It was chock-full of good writing and healthy attitudes. Jamie offered up this little caustic reminder from her wife, which, while dated, has a lot of commonsense for all of us who wish to exercise their feminine side. – Ed.)

It's been nine months since my husband revealed he was a transvestite, and I'm fed up. Not with the fact that he likes to wear women's clothing; that's still a shock, but I'm coming to terms with it. No, what's riling me is, shall we say, a certain underlying attitude that he (and some of the other would-be gals I've met) seem to have about what it means to be a woman.

The last straw came tonight, when I found him curled up on the couch reading *Cosmopolitan*. The requisite blond bimbo graced the cover, wearing a red leather bra, a drugged expression, and not much else. This issue had insightful articles like "Confessions of Three Gigolos" and "The Lowdown on the Topless-Bar Scene." My favorite piece, however, was "The Bear Truth: Life from Fuzzy Wuzzy's Point of View." It was (I am not making this up) a spread consisting of photos of an oh-so-cute little bear cub and his lovable parents. Enough already!

If I sound somewhat bilious, it's because I am. Let me calm down a bit and explain why I'm writing this. I'm 39 years old, and about two decades ago I made a decision to reject some of the feminine frippery that I found—to dust off a phrase from the Sixties—demeaning to women. I'm talking about makeup, unnaturally curly hair, nails long enough to impair dexterity, shoes two sizes too small, starving oneself thin, and so on. (What twisted piece of karma gave me a husband who wears high heels is beyond me, but I can't help but see the humor in it.) I'm not saying I'm anything other than a product of my times, but the point is that I came to believe that while clothes make the man, they sure as heck don't make the woman. It really upsets me to see someone I love actively embracing the very aspects of femininity that I find trivial and silly, while at the same time making statements about "getting in touch with his female nature." Granted, I don't expect to find my husband poring over *The Second Sex*—but I'd be happy if he (and some of the rest of you ladies) would give a little more thought about what it means to be a member of the weaker sex (as they used to call it).

Now, I understand that to realize your fantasy, you have to put on lots of makeup, do your nails and hair, wear a dress, adopt exaggerated mannerisms, and so on. That's fine. But please don't tell me that doing so transforms you into a more feminine being. If you're going to say that (and perhaps not all of you do), then show me some

evidence. Show me some compassion, some communications skills, a heightened sense of aesthetics, some emotional adroitness—something! If you can't, please don't claim to have crossed any gender boundaries; you're just a guy in a dress.

And, for God's sake, if you must emulate a woman, don't be a bimbo. Don't read *Cosmo* and prattle on at length about nail polish and stockings. If you do, please don't do it around me. I have other things to think about. Don't talk to me about the Imperial Court and then – as my husband made the grave mistake of doing – tell me my work for woman's rights is pointless.

I'm sorry to sound so hard-hearted. Perhaps I should show a little more compassion myself. But I'm writing this partly as an exercise in catharsis. Sometimes it's easier for me to write something down than to say it out loud. More importantly, though, I hope I can at least begin to express some of the frustrations many of your wives or girlfriends might be experiencing. I can only speak for myself, of course, but I have talked to a number of partners of transvestite men, and several of them have mentioned the same annoyance at men thinking they can enter "our turf." It's not that easy to articulate, but I feel you're mocking my gender by focusing your attention on aspects of appearance and manner that [some] men find attractive and [some] women find offensive. If your wife or girlfriend seems angry at you sometimes, perhaps this is part of the reason. Maybe you should talk to her about it.

I hope that this article does more than allow me to vent my spleen. I hope it can help couples start talking about at least some of the issues (and there are many) that are bothering transvestites' significant others. Perhaps it will initiate some discussions that will help some of us understand why you do what you do. I know that many S.O.'s, for one reason or another, don't attend discussion sessions or support groups, or even talk about these issues with close friends. It must be very hard for these women, and it's up to you to try and dispel some of their frustration, anger, and feelings of helplessness.

Here's a request. Perhaps some of you could tell a crossdresser "what it means to be a woman." I, for one, would be interested in what you think, and I bet a lot of other women would be too. Thank you for reading my tirade. I feel better already.

By Erfert Fenton <http://www.fentonia.com/erf/>

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MY PRIDE WEEK

by Elise Ryan



Well, I promised Shae I would write a few words about the events I endured during Pride Week here in Edmonton...

Pride Week started Friday Night with the Kickoff for the Mr. and Ms. Gay Edmonton pageant, where I met all the contestants at the Roost... just another large party night there, as was Saturday night there. On the way home a guy who thought I was a hooker accosted me. He was arrested as he hit me in front of the cops... it was great fun actually except for the shot to the stomach I took that is. Sunday night I took part in the Twiggy's Friday week Drag show with most of the local Drag Queens.

On Tuesday I took part in the second annual Jell-O Wrestling at Secrets. I got all dressed in a bathing suit and sarong with the full makeup and wig to get it all messed up with Jell-O. In the first match I was wrestling against another CD named Suzy Love. I won that match and progressed to the semi finals where I lost to the young lady above(I had to lose that one; could not beat a lady). The event was filmed by the local CBC station... waiting to see the footage of that... During the matches I found a new form of embarrassment as during the matches my breast forms went floating away in the Jell-O. Not to mention the state of the wig I had on...

Wednesday night I was back at Secrets to take part in the Ms Edmonton's Leathers' beer bash and fetish show. Maria put on a BDSM display for those unacquainted with their lifestyle. It was a different and interesting evening, as I had never seen such a display myself - educational and informative enough to determine it's not for me.

Thursday night was very quiet, as everyone seemed to take it as a day of rest before the long and arduous weekend. Friday Night was the second part of the Mr. and Ms. Gay Edmonton pageant. I took part in the show as a back up dancer for one of the other entertainers, in a PVC dress and my knee high black boots.

Saturday morning was the Parade, where it seemed I was the only one that made it down for that (if there were others sorry that I did not see you) so I made my presence known by riding along on the Secrets Bar Float! Even talked briefly at the party afterwards with the Minister of Health, on a few items including the Tcon conference.

Saturday night I lost even more weight dying of the heat at the Roost for the last night of Pride Week. It seemed as if Sunday was a really quiet day for me... I needed the rest.

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A BLACK&WHITE AFFAIR 2002

This area has been left intentionally blank due to privacy considerations.

One Saturday in April, a totally awesome evening was had by four of the Illusions girls. From left, myself; our own Elise Ryan, looking restrained but oh-so-nicely done in a black velvet minidress with lace collar, showing the usual five miles of leg and extreme heels; our forever-blonde past prez Rachel in a long black evening dress with a silver applique pattern; Brittany in an excellent

black spaghetti-strap minidress with feathers in all the right places. We all wore rhinestones set in silver, hurray!

You may notice a trend in black here - we attended the Black&White Affair, a formal fundraiser held annually for HIV/AIDS, at the Winspear concert hall (ooh la la). There was a silent auction, hordes of drop-dead-gorgeous, stunningly dressed women of all ages, good and varied entertainment, overpriced drinks, and great food. The players in the Kit Kat Club were, as usual, fabulous, and dancing was done 'till the girls glowed. Kennedy, one of the singers, (ohmigawd, so darn cute in a red sequined minidress and Motown hair) wanted to know where I got my wig. Flatterer...

We grazed and mingled shamelessly, put down our bids, smiled and got lots in return, complimented others' dresses and were ego-stroked massively. We got absolute and total acceptance and enthusiasm from the crowd, Elise was a hit with the ladies as usual, and the emcee, Shannon from A-channel, dropped by to chat.

The fundraiser was, to all accounts, a rousing success, a winning auction bid was tallied in our group, and a wonderful time was had by all - truly, one of the best times a crossdresser can have here in River City!

- Shae Guerin www.tic.ab.ca/~shae/

MEDIA REVIEWED

This summer wasn't even really great for sitting and reading, but some media was partaken of. Shelly reports that one day this spring, the K-97 morning guys did a show on crossdressers, and that the tone was generally light and positive. Marsha Black got some print for her TS tale, well-done pieces in both SEE and the Sun - you go, girl in black!

New issues of both Ladylike Magazine and GirlTalk have been acquired and perused; while sometimes a bit daunting, these publications provide a good look at how well this can be done.

LLMag, Box 491, Lionville PA USA 19353-0491,
US\$48/4issues.

GirlTalk, Box 4915, N. Hollywood CA USA 91617-1915,
US\$75/6issues.

Shelly mentioned one day how she was trying to track down a video of a television show she caught one day; she described it as a good look at contemporary crossdressers. Shortly thereafter, she found an ad for it in GirlTalk, and promptly acquired it.

All Dressed Up And No Place To Go: The Secret World Of Heterosexual Crossdressing (1996, Cajun Films) is a

well-edited, fast-paced documentary focusing on four crossdressers: Jean, a lawyer taking in a "Moonlight In Manhattan" weekend enferme; Joann, writer, publisher of Ladylike, mover and shaker within the crossdressing community; Sheneil, an older socialite having fun whenever she wants; and Dalie, an average person with a supportive wife.

For sheer happiness in being a woman, Jean's tale is the most entertaining of the three - she shops, does the nightclubs, and passes along some decent insight to the camera crew - "I'm two different people, and I don't realize it, until I look in a mirror and see what I look like

The Closeted Crossdresser

This is a group in which members can openly discuss issues associated with crossdressing. The purpose of the group is to assist one another by sharing ideas, stories, photos, fashion and makeup tips and techniques, or simply chatting about crossdressing. There's a wealth of info and support, and it's a fine place to be. Join us!



<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/closetedcrossdresser>

when I'm dressed up, because I'm still looking out of these eyes."

All the stories are heartening: Joann's upward climb to establish a more positive profile for crossdressers in the world-at-large, Sheneil's cheery ebullience at work and play, an open and enlightening look at some serious conference-goers, and Dalie's grand fun at home and in her community. Some of the negative reactions are as sad as one could expect - daughter can only see how her friends would take it, crossdresser doesn't want to put her loved ones through it, and how does a single CD find a suitable mate?

There are interesting confessions, plot twists, fabulous outfits, and chats with shrinks and makeup artists. The video ends on an upbeat note, with Jean showing up with her new ladyfriend, Dalie putting aside some of her crossdressing ways to become someone in between, and Joann pronouncing solemnly, "I think that we're our own worst enemies." This video leaves one wanting to get dressed up and celebrate.

"All Dressed Up And No Place To Go" is available for \$US43.45 from Cajun Films, Dept.S, 36 East 28th St, New York, NY USA 10003 (212-353-0500)



We get newsletters! The girls in Winnipeg's Masquerade have had a whale of a time this summer, as evidenced by the cheery articles and plethora of photos in their newsletter, Lipstick&Lace. There's a quartet of them doing some fun drag, and what seem to be lots of opportunities to get out and show pride. Masquerade, c/o Lady Godiva Boutique, 832 Corydon Ave, Winnipeg MB R3M 0Y2. <http://communities.msn.ca/masqueradeMb>

The Emerald Coast Chapter of the Florida Panhandle TG Alliance sends us their Emerald Mirror. They do lots of outreach, and are a cheerful, busy bunch. You can contact them via: Web page, at: www.eccpantra.org E-mail to: eccpantra@yahoo.com ECCoP - PMB #129, 8084 N. Davis Hwy. E3, Pensacola, FL USA 32514

Cross-Talk is the Northern Concord newsletter, based out of the Manchester area of the UK. This pocket-digest is a delight to hold and experience, with some wonderful tales of cycling, enjoying Venice's Carnival, photos of

delighted and delightful girls, some of the vaunted British cynicism (impeccably trowelled on), and some serious advertising. Overall, a brilliant effort. Contact Jenny Baker at the Northern Concord, Box 258, Manchester, M60 1LN England, or at her e-mail, JennyB@northernconcord.org.uk.

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Illusions member Nancy has started an Edmonton-based Yahoo group, Edmonton Crossdressers and Transgendered Support. It's intended for discussion of crossdressing and related issues, for photo and file sharing, and all-around support. Contact ad and sexual overtones are frowned upon. Power to all those; it's becoming quite a good resource for events and getting to meet locals.

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Edm_Crossdressers_And_Transgender_Support/



Links this issue:

Up for the latest info and resources on the GLBT community? Try the Gay&Lesbian Community Centre of Edmonton, at <http://edmc.net/glcc/>. Then there's always Times.10, more oriented to the queer community, but chock full of photos and more links. <http://www.times10.org/>

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